



MANTRA

Sacred Words of Power

THOMAS ASHLEY-FARRAND

STUDY GUIDE

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THOMAS ASHLEY-FARRAND

SOUNDS TRUE

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Published 1999

Printed in the United States of America

Thomas Ashley-Farrand.

Mantra: Sacred Words of Power.

ISBN 1-56455-697-2

Also by Thomas Ashley-Farrand:

Healing Mantras: Using Sound Affirmations for Personal Power, Creativity, and Healing. (New York: Ballantine Wellspring, 1999)

The Ancient Science of Sanskrit Mantra and Ceremony. Vol. 1: *Mantra*. Vol. 2: *Great Spiritual Disciplines and Ceremonies.* Privately published, 1995. Available at www.sanskritmantra.com.

True Stories of Spiritual Power. Privately published, 1995. Available at www.sanskritmantra.com.

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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

Mantra: Sacred Words of Power includes more than sixty mantras that you can use to heal various aspects of your experience. On the tape set, each mantra is enunciated slowly, then chanted several times so that you can learn it and join in. Use this study guide to refresh your memory on specific mantras, and to learn more about their origins and uses. Once you are familiar with the Sanskrit pronunciations, you can simply consult this printed guide as needed to find the appropriate mantra for your situation.

SESSION ONE: THE ORIGINS OF MANTRA

A bias in modern spiritual thought claims that light symbolizes the highest attainment in spirituality and divinity. We see light surrounding the Christ and the nimbus of the saints. Light graces the priests who carry and work with the Jewish Ark of the Covenant. The Buddha also has a halo of light that pours forth blessings on all who come into his presence. With all of these signs, many of us pray for “light on the path” and strive for something we call “enlightenment.” But a deeper investigation reveals that sound, rather than light, represents the highest spiritual state.

There is ample scriptural evidence for this conclusion. In the Old Testament, God did various things for several days before s/he created light. If light was the highest quality, s/he would have created it first. The New Testament, Gospel of John, starts: “In the beginning was the Word . . .” Light was not the beginning. Rather, it was sound, in the form of divine speech. Neither the Old nor the New Testament contains a verse saying, “And God made light to shine. . . .” Instead, God creates the phenomenon by speaking it. “And God *said*, ‘Let there be light.’” The primary mechanism of creation is sound.

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The Eastern religious texts reveal a similar orientation. Sir John Woodroffe's *The Garland of Letters* includes a translation of a scripture called the *Satapatha Brahmana*. Here, we read:

"In the beginning was God with power through speech. God said, 'May I be many. . . may I be propagated.' And by his will expressed through subtle speech, he united himself with that speech and became pregnant. Prajapathi and Saraswati were then created. And Prajapathi is called the progenitor of all beings."

This statement sounds amazingly like the Gospel of John, yet it was written thousands of years before Christ. Other references to the divine creative qualities of sound abound. In Chinese Buddhism, Kuan-yin is referred to as the "divine voice" that calls forth the illusive form of the universe from the seven elements. The *Vedas*, the world's oldest recorded scriptures, speak of the divine sound current called *Shabda Brahma* (sounds or words of the Creator), which permeates all and is a key to creation.

Some modern teachers echo this ancient idea. Sufi mystic master Hazrat Inayat Khan has written, "Divine sound is the cause of all manifestation. The knower of the mystery of sound knows the mystery of the whole universe." In the early part of the twentieth century, H.P. Blavatsky (founder of the Theosophical Society) wrote in *The Secret Doctrine*, "Sound is a tremendous occult [hidden] power. It is such a stupendous force that the electricity generated by a million Niagaras could never counteract even the smallest potentiality when directed by proper knowledge."

SANSKRIT MANTRAS: AN INTRODUCTION

The word *mantra* is based on the Sanskrit roots *man* (mind) and *trai* (liberation device). In Hindu and Buddhist usage, it has come to mean "spiritual sound formula." Hindu scripture calls mantra "that which, when contemplated and repeated, will offer protection."

The proper study of Sanskrit mantra includes physical and spiritual anatomy; the system of subtle channels in the body; diagrams of spiritual energy processing centers (chakras); and the human voice, which powerfully influences all of the above. Sanskrit mantras are also key to techniques for awakening *kundalini*, a subtle power cell located at the base of the spine (see "Kundalini," page 15).

One does not have to subscribe to the Hindu religion in order to use and benefit from mantra. Sincere seekers on many diverse paths – Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, and others – have used mantras to enrich their

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spiritual practice. The book *The Kalachakra Tantra*, by Tenzin Gyaltso (the fourteenth Dalai Lama) and Jeffery Hopkins, proclaims that “without depending upon mantra ... Buddhahood cannot be attained.”

The Hindu Scriptures

The mantras on *Mantra: Sacred Words of Power* are drawn from a variety of scriptural sources. Foremost among these are the four *Vedas* – compiled between 1000 and 500 BCE, making them the world’s oldest religious writings. The sections of the Veda richest in commentary and instructions on mantra are:

- the *Brahmanas*
- the *Aranyakas* (devoted to the more secret aspects of ritual and mantra)
- the *Upanishads*, which form the final portion of the Vedas

Another important source of the mantras and associated teachings in this course is the *Puranas*: a body of Indian myth, history, and legend.

The Purusha-Suktum

The *purusha* is the primordial Cosmic Being, the source of all human life. Each of us is said to originate in some part of this transcendental overself (this is the earliest recorded instance of a spiritual text explaining the creation of the human race). The ancient seers who encountered this being in meditation created the world’s first religious ceremonies to celebrate the purusha: “that Great Being of which we are all a part.” On *Mantra: Sacred Words of Power*, I chant a hymn to this Cosmic Being called the Purusha-Suktum. You may use this as a meditation and mantra attunement.

The Chakra System

Chakras are whirling energy centers in the subtle body that correspond to the major nerve ganglia located along the spine. Just as the nerve plexuses are in constant motion, regulating our various physical systems, the chakras are busy taking in and distributing a basic energy (*prana*) throughout both physical and subtle bodies. Some spiritual teachers describe chakras as resembling large, vibrant sunflowers. Those who are able to see the chakras, like those who can see auras, describe colors of various hues and intensities, indicating health or disease.

Mantras are a powerful way to increase the energy processing levels of the chakras. It is as if a light bulb with a wattage capacity of fifty watts becomes enabled to hold a hundred watts, then five hundred watts, and so forth.

SESSION TWO: SEED MANTRAS

The simplest kinds of mantras are called “seed sounds.” These short, powerful sounds are also used as building blocks for longer mantras. Many of them are associated with Hindu and Buddhist deities I call “anthropomorphized principles.”

Because raw power is not easily understood by the mind, Eastern tradition embodies its various aspects in human-like deities that make them easier to relate to. Whether one calls these beings principles, ancestors, or gods and goddesses does not matter over the long term. The powers they represent can change our lives for the better, no matter what we may believe in the beginning.

Here are some seed sounds for the primary Hindu beings or anthropomorphized principles:

SHRIM [pronounced “shreem”]: This is the sound for the feminine principle of abundance called Lakshmi. Repetition of the SHRIM mantra produces the ability to attract and maintain abundance: financial wealth, good health, friends, enough food to eat, inner peace, the love of children and family, and so forth.

KLIM [“kleem”]: This is the seed mantra for the principle of attraction. It is sometimes combined with other mantras to attract an object of desire. As you chant the mantra KLIM, the power of your focus upon the desired condition becomes more intense.

DUM [“doom”]: This is the seed for the feminine principle called Durga, which invokes protection from that which is feared.

KRIM [“kreem”]: The seed of Kali, the primordial feminine energy. Her considerable power is invoked to help burn away negative ego.

GUM [as in “chewing gum”]: This seed for Ganapathi, son of Shiva and Parvati and remover of obstacles, brings success in endeavors. It is especially good for those who are just getting started with mantras and want to test them.

EIM [“I’m”]: This seed sound is associated with the feminine principle called Saraswati, who rules artistic and scientific endeavors, music, and education. The same principle governs the development and manifestation of spiritual knowledge, good education, memory and intelligence, and musical skill.

GLAUM [“glah-owm”]: Another seed for Ganapathi, that removes energetic obstacles lying specifically between the throat and the base of the spine.

HAUM: [“how’m”]: Seed for the abode of transcendental consciousness (the masculine principle called Shiva).

HRIM [“hreem”]: This seed sound, found in both Vedic and Tibetan Buddhist practices, is used for seeing through the illusion of this reality. Both traditions also include it in other, longer mantras. Mahamaya is one name for

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the feminine principle available through the sacred heart center, for which this mantra is the seed. Narayana, an androgynous aspect of divinity, is another name for the principle manifesting at this point.

Major Chakras and Their Seed Sounds

Each of the major chakras has a seed sound associated with it:

1. The base center – *muladhara* chakra
Principle: earth. Seed mantra: LUM
2. The sexual center – *swadhisthana* chakra
Principle: water. Seed mantra: VUM
3. The navel center – *manipura* chakra
Principle: fire. Seed mantra: RUM
4. The heart center – *anahata* chakra
Principle: air. Seed mantra: YUM
5. The throat center – *vishuddha* chakra
Principle: ether. Seed mantra: HUM
6. The brow center – *ajna* chakra
Principle: mind. Seed mantra: OM

(This chakra, centered between the eyebrows, is sometimes called the “third eye.”)

7. Crown center – *sahasrara* chakra
Principle: transcendence of individuality

(The crown chakra is silent; therefore, it has no seed sound.)

SAUH [“saw”] is not associated with a spinal location, like the other seed syllables in this list. Rather, it is a spiritual principle that operates through one of the petals in the ajna (brow) chakra to activate *shakti* (the creative principle).

SESSION THREE: KARMA AND MANTRAS

In order to derive maximum benefit from your mantra practice, you will find it helpful to understand some basic concepts underlying the mantra principle.

1. Mantras are energy-based sounds.

Mantra derives its power from the energy effect its sounds produce. Pronouncing a mantra creates a particular physical vibration, in the form of sound, that creates various effects in both the physical and subtle bodies.

2. Mantras are chakra-based sounds.

The fifty letters in the Sanskrit alphabet correspond to the fifty petals traditionally depicted on each of chakras one through six (from the base of the

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spine to the brow). When a Sanskrit mantra is uttered, the petals corresponding to the letters in the words of the mantra vibrate in spiritual resonance, energizing the petal, which then becomes tuned to a higher energy state. Ambient spiritual energy is attracted to the person pronouncing the mantra, producing a net gain in usable spiritual energy.

3. Mantra focused with intent increases its effect.

Intention – or the reason we are saying the mantra – is superimposed on the physical vibration, increasing and strengthening the effect of mantra practice.

4. Mantras have only an approximate language-based translation.

The true nature of a mantra is the experience that it ultimately creates in the individual who chants it. All who chant the mantra will arrive at a similar experiential definition.

5. Mantra energizes prana.

In Eastern traditions, prana is a basic form of life energy that is capable of being transferred between individuals. When we pronounce a particular mantra while visualizing an internal organ bathed in light, the power of the mantra and the prana become concentrated in that organ, with beneficial effect.

6. Mantras are energy that can be likened to fire.

The same fire can cook your lunch or burn down the forest. Similarly, mantras produce spiritual energy of great intensity. There are powerful mantra prescriptions not even taught in the West; but those taught in this program are perfectly safe to use on a daily basis.

7. Mantras eventually quiet the mind.

Used over a protracted period of time, mantra quiets the myriad random and incoherent babblings of the subconscious mind. The dedicated use of mantra can dig into crystallized thoughts stored in the organs and glands and transform these bodily parts into repositories of peace.

Intense mantra activity can sometimes also be disconcerting. Imagine trying to clean a swimming pool with several inches of mud accumulated on the bottom. The very act of putting a suction hose on the bottom of the pool and turning on the motor will cause the muck to swirl up into the clear water above. Clarity will be temporarily obstructed as the water appears to become dirtier than it was before. This is similar to some effects produced by the intense use of mantra.

The Meaning of Karma

When we practice mantra, we directly affect the quality and quantity of our own karma, as well as that of the planet. According to both Hindu and Buddhist teachings, karma is nothing more than the law of cause and effect. The New Testament tells us, "As we have sewn, so shall we reap." This idea simply means that what we have put in motion is returned to us in some way. This returning "stuff" is what we call karma.

Central to a complete understanding of the idea of karma is the concept of reincarnation, or many past lives in which karma has been created. Karma is *all* that we have created through past thought, word, and deed, in all of our lifetimes. The object of human effort is to be free of all karma and thus pass on to the next stage of spiritual development, whatever that may be. One way to accomplish this goal is through "good works" that tend to balance bad deeds in other lives. While "good karma" may be preferred over "bad karma," the ultimate goal is to have no karma at all, at which point we are released from the "wheel of rebirth" and transcend the earthly plane. Good karma, just like its opposite, attaches us to this plane. As they say in the East, "A gold chain will bind you just as firmly as an iron one."

An attribute of the law of karma is the idea of grace. Our negative karma may be forgiven by divine authority, or even taken on by someone else in the service of some higher purpose. Christians believe that Jesus took on the collective sins of humanity. In India and Tibet, stories abound of spiritual teachers supporting a student's journey by "taking on" portions of their karma.

Four Types of Karma

Classical Eastern texts describe four types of karma.

1. *Sanchita* karma is the sum of all accumulated past actions in all of our previous, individual lifetimes. This type of karma sets the stage for our present lifetime.
2. *Prarabdha* karma is that portion of sanchita karma that has resulted in this present lifetime. With the practice of mantra, we can alter our inner conditions and thereby change the effects of prarabdha karma.
3. *Agami* karma results from actions in the present lifetime that will affect future incarnations.
4. *Kriyamana* karma results immediately from our present actions. If, for example, you strike out at someone, they may very well strike you back. Kriyamana karma is "instant karma."

Storing and Working Off Karma

We carry our karma with us like baggage, and store it in various parts of the body. At the moment of birth, a portion of our total karma is released into the physical body and another portion goes into the subtle body. The sum of these two portions represents the karma we have to work with in our present life.

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Karma affects even our birth situation, presenting us with a predisposition and an environment that will influence our habits, prejudices, and the development of talents and abilities in this life. The people or circumstances we encounter trigger individual bits of karma, bringing them into play. How we handle things determines whether we work off past karma or create new karma.

Prarabdha karma – which is represented astrologically by the position of the planets at the time of birth – is said to be the only kind of karma that cannot be changed. But this is not entirely correct. While we cannot change the position of the planets themselves, we can change the way we receive their vibrations.

There are specific mantras for the sun, the moon, each of the seven inner planets, and what are called the nodes of the moon. By chanting mantra, we change the condition of the organs and chakras, thereby changing the karmic effect of the planetary vibrations.

Your astrological chart will help you determine which planetary mantras can be most helpful to you. If, for example, the sun appears in some astrologically negative aspect for you, you may wish to chant the following sun mantra:

Om Suryaya Namaha

“Om and salutations to Surya, presiding spirit of the sun.”

Likewise, difficult moon aspects can be addressed with this mantra:

Om Chandraya Namaha

“Om and salutations to Chandra, presiding spirit of the moon.”

Other short mantras relating to the various planets follow.

Mars: *Om Angarakaya Namaha*

“Om and salutations to the presiding spirit of the planet Mars.”

Mercury: *Om Budhaya Namaha*

“Om and salutations to Buddha, presiding spirit of the planet Mercury.”

Jupiter: *Om Gurave Namaha*

“Om and salutations to Guru, presiding spirit of the planet Jupiter.”

Venus: *Om Shukraya Namaha*

“Om and salutations to Shukra, presiding spirit of the planet Venus.”

Saturn: *Om Sri Shanaishcharaya Namaha*

“Om and salutations to Shani, presiding spirit of the planet Saturn.”

You should use the word Namaha in this mantra only if you are younger than twenty-eight; that is, in the first Saturnian learning cycle of your life. At twenty-nine, the body's energy rises to the solar plexus chakra. The feminine form of the mantra – using Swaha in place of the gender-neutral Namaha – is more useful at this point. Use this rule for every mantra on *Mantra: Sacred Words of Power* that ends with either word, except where specifically indicated.

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Om Sri Shanaishwaraya Swaha

“Om and salutations to Saturn, the planet of lessons.”

The north node of the moon (known in Vedic astrology as Rahu):

Om Rahuve Namaha

“Om and salutations to Rahu, presiding spirit of the north node of the moon.”

The south node of the moon (known in Vedic astrology as Ketu):

Om Ketuve Namaha

“Om and salutations to Ketu, presiding spirit of the south node of the moon.”

For a fuller discussion of the planets and their mantras, see “Session Nine: Mantras and Health” (page 22).

If you don’t know what specific difficulties exist in your astrological chart, sit in meditation while listening to the *Navagraha Pida* stanzas on Session Three of *Mantra: Sacred Words of Power*. This extended mantra is credited with the ability to soften one’s planetary karma in general.

Using Mantra to Change Your Karma

Please understand that if you undertake to work in a disciplined manner with any of these mantras, you will be setting certain forces in motion. The energy of the mantra itself will work in a specific way with your intention, adding focus and power to the practice. Your job is to be ready to receive the result – which may not necessarily match your expectations.

Mantra practice can be done anywhere: in your car, while performing household chores, etc. It is beneficial, however, to select a quiet place where you can ground your daily meditation and mantra practice. Here, you may prepare an altar on top of a dresser, in a closet – or even in a free room, if possible. You might wish to place pictures of spiritual teachers or icons, *malas* (rosaries used to count repetitions), and other devotional items on your altar.

There are two primary ways in which mantra is traditionally practiced. Which one you choose will depend upon the circumstances of your life and the urgency of your intention.

The Forty-Day Approach

Chant the mantra one hundred and eight times twice a day (or as much as possible) for forty days. Most people will achieve some kind of significant result through this process.

Repetition by the Numbers

Traditionally, one must chant a mantra 125,000 times in order to achieve continuing proficiency with the practice. This may sound like a lot, but consider that for a short mantra, one hour of repetition per day totals between

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two thousand and three thousand, depending on your speed. At twenty-five hundred per hour and one hour per day, you will reach the goal of 125,000 in just fifty days – less than two months.

When you first start chanting mantras, I recommend that you work with just one at a time. As your practice matures, however, you may want to work with more than one mantra at a time. You can accomplish this by chanting one in the morning and another in the evening; or you might recite one mantra for a week, one for another week, and another during the third week.

Your Spiritual Diary

You will find it enormously useful to keep regular notes of your spiritual studies and practices and the experiences connected with them. This will not only help you stay focused on your current practice: it will help you gain perspective on your path as you look back over past passages of your life.

SESSION FOUR: NARAYANA AND BRAHMA MANTRAS

Two of the most important anthropomorphized personalities in the Hindu tradition, as they pertain to the practice of mantra, are the deities Narayana and Brahma.

Brahma

Brahma, a member of the Hindu masculine trinity, is a metaphor for all of creation. A Brahma mantra given to advanced students is *Sat Chid Ekam Brahma*, which is translated as follows:

Sat = truth

Chid = spiritual mind-stuff

Ekam = one, without a second

Brahma = this entire cosmos with all of its contents

A longer version of this same mantra contains seed sounds that invoke Saraswati, the feminine power behind Brahma's action:

Om Eim Hrim Shrim Klim Sauh Sat Chid Ekam Brahma

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The Kalachakra Doctrine

Before the birth of Brahma, Hindu scriptures teach, there was no such thing as time. But because Brahma's life had a beginning, it also had to have a middle and an end. Thus, the concept of linear time emerged. The primary mantra for working with linear time is based on the Kalachakra doctrine – purported to be the last teaching the Buddha gave before he died.

In Sanskrit, *chakra* means wheel and *kala* means time; thus, this deity could be called either the “wheel of ages” or the “chakra of time.” Some teachers place this esoteric chakra just below the fifth, or throat, chakra in the body. Initiations into Kalachakra practice have been conducted since 1980 in the West by the late Kalu Rinpoche and the Dalai Lama. Those who regularly practice this mantra after receiving it from bona fide spiritual authority are promised rebirth in the mystical Tibetan city of Shambhala three hundred to five hundred years from now. At that time, it is said, the forces of good and evil will engage in a great battle. Those participating will be spiritually liberated. The mantra for Kalachakra is:

Om Ha Ksa Ma La Va Ra Yam Swaha

These seed sounds are directed at purifying the entire subtle body. The mantra is used to hasten both personal and planetary evolution.

Narayana

The transcendental divine substance from which the universe was created is characterized as a human-like being called Narayana. The creation myth says that Narayana lay sleeping when a lotus flower grew out of his stomach. The flower turned into a four-faced being: Brahma the Creator. According to the *Puranas*, a portion of Narayana exists in each of us, in the form of a divine flame shining in the *hrit padma* (sacred heart center).

Narayana Meditation

The divine essence of Narayana, as we have seen, is not separate from you or me. Each of us is an integral and essential part of Narayana. With this in mind, assume your customary meditation posture and let this Sanskrit hymn penetrate beyond your analytical mind. Let your attention rest with Narayana's flame as it burns steadily in the subtle heart center.

SESSIONS FIVE AND SIX: THE AVATAR MANTRAS

An avatar is “one who descends from above.” The ten avatars of Vishnu have appeared in Eastern myth and tradition since the earliest recorded texts. These beings, free of all karma, appear at critical moments – when forces of destruction or evil predominate – to restore divine energy and balance to the procession of human affairs. Each avatar continues the work of the previous one and starts his own work, as well.

Only some of the avatars have mantras associated with them. These, along with their summarized legends, appear below.

Narasimha

Narasimha – the fourth avatar of Vishnu – is legendary for his protection of a highly spiritual soul named Prahalada, who was born to an evil, demonic father. This father had received a blessing, such that he could be killed by neither man nor beast, nor under most normal circumstances. Narasimha, however, was a man/lion incarnation with the power of Vishnu. He was not covered by the protective blessing and thus was able to defeat the demon. Accordingly, his mantra is used to defeat the seemingly unconquerable.

Om Kshraum Narasimhaya Namaha

“I salute and manifest that energy that destroys the seemingly indestructible.”

The seed sound “*Kshraum*” rhymes with “how’m”; the “ksh” is aspirated, but not vocalized. As the seed mantra for Narasimha, this sound unseals things that need releasing and defeats seemingly indestructible negative energies.

Prahalada, the beneficiary of Narasimha’s help, was born after his parents were given a special mantra by the sage Narada. This mantra is still used today to bring an advanced spiritual soul into embodiment.

Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya

“Om and salutations to the Indwelling One.”

Vasudeva is the individual “Indweller” aspect of God. This great, twelve-syllabled, mukti (liberation) mantra is widely practiced by many diverse Hindu sects in India, all of which recognize its potency to eventually free one from the cycle of rebirth.

Rama

Rama, the seventh avatar of Vishnu, incarnated to demonstrate correct behavior in every instance of life. Rama was heir to the royal throne in his kingdom, but instead, he was forced to spend twelve years in the forest. His exile was part of a divine design, for in those years, he blessed and healed many people who might not otherwise have met him. Rama’s adventures –

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and the particular powers of his mantras – are the subject of *The Ramayana*, India's popular spiritual epic.

Rama represents the soul or divine Self. Sita, his wife, is the kundalini *shakti* (divine energy). When she is abducted by the demon Ravana – representing egotistic, selfish desires – Rama sends the monkey warrior, Hanuman (symbolizing the prana) to find her. Hanuman finds Sita and sends word to Rama. Ultimately, the divine Self is reunited with the divine energy and the couple is enthroned as rulers of the kingdom.

The meaning of this parable is that when there is some blockage of the kundalini energy, *pranayama* (scientific rhythmic breathing) will always disclose the location of the problem. Having identified the obstacle, one applies mantra, which emanates from the divine Self within; therefore, like Rama, it always defeats even the most stubborn ego-centered obstacle.

The so-called *Rama Taraka* mantra (below) is recited by those who wish to realize the divine Self, overcome karma, and end the cycle of rebirth.

Om Sri Rama Jaya Rama, Jaya Jaya Rama

“Om to Rama and his consort – Victory to Rama, victory; victory again to Rama.”

You can also invoke Rama simply by dividing his name into its constituent syllables: *ra* and *ma*. *Ra* is associated with the solar, masculine current that runs down the right side of the body. *Ma* is associated with the lunar, feminine current, on the left side of the body. By repeating the word *Rama* over and over again, you begin balancing the two currents and their activity so that they can work with the higher forms of energy that will eventually come up the spine. This single word, Rama, qualifies as a healing mantra in its own right.

The following mantra invokes the mercy and power of Rama. It is an excellent formula to use when you feel the need of divine help, but aren't sure exactly what form that help should take.

Om Sri Rama Sharanam Mama

“I take refuge in Sri Rama.”

Hanuman

Mantras associated with the monkey warrior Hanuman invigorate and vitalize the prana. These mantras promote health and strength, both material and spiritual.

Om Hum Hanumate Vijayam

“Om and victory to the prana in its evolutionary course.”

The syllable *Hum* is especially helpful for eliminating blockages in the throat center.

Om Sri Hanumate Namaha

“Om and salutations to the conscious prana.”

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The words *Sri Hanumate*, used together, help to remove energetic blockages originating at the base of the spine.

Krishna

The eighth avatar of Vishnu, Krishna, is said to be an emanation of divine Love. Krishna came specifically to liberate sixteen thousand advanced souls who had only a little karma remaining. For the rest of humanity, he brought the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which explain fifteen ways to achieve self-realization, each suited to a distinct type of person. The following mantras are chanted by those seeking ecstatic union with divine Love.

Om Sri Krishnaya Namaha

“Om and salutations to divine Love in the form of Krishna.”

Om Klim Krishnaya Namaha

“Om. I attract the principle of divine Love in the form of Krishna and offer salutations.”

Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

This *maha* (great) mantra, which salutes Rama and Krishna again and again, is powerful in removing karma in this age of spiritual darkness.

Buddha

The Buddha is the ninth – and most controversial – avatar of Vishnu. Some claim he was not an avatar at all, because his teachings contradict parts of classical Hindu doctrine. While not all Buddhist sects practice mantra, those who do chant the following *prajnaparamita* (perfection of wisdom) mantra to prepare the mind for seeking higher states of consciousness:

Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Swaha.

“Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone beyond beyond, hail the goer.”

See Session Eleven (page 26) for other Buddhist mantras.

SESSION SEVEN – THE FEMININE PRINCIPLE IN MANTRA PRACTICE

According to Hindu tradition, the nature of power is feminine. Although the consciousness that triggers spiritual activity is said to be masculine, it is powerless without the feminine energy that drives it. The shakti of kundalini, the feminine power cell lying in repose at the base of the spine, is dormant and latent in most of humanity. When it becomes active even in the smallest degree, we develop the power to heal, the power to see things not yet come, and other special gifts of the Great Feminine. The following mantras are

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particularly applicable to our culture and era, where the indispensable power of the feminine is frequently trivialized or overlooked altogether.

Kundalini

It is taught that the locus of feminine power in our own bodies is the great kundalini power cell, which lies at the base of the spine. Over the course of many lifetimes, this personal transformer powers our spiritual progress as its inherent shakti “awakens” and moves up the spine. As the kundalini shakti touches the pituitary and pineal glands and the chakras, it activates them in new ways, making more energy available to them. Dormant brain power potential becomes active in a way that cannot be described in words.

Shakti

Shakti represents the active energy of the divine that powers all forms of creation. In Hindu tradition, Shakti is anthropomorphized as the consort of Shiva. There are six types of shakti:

para shakti – the forces of heat and light

jnana shakti – the power of the intellect

iccha shakti – the power of will

kriya shakti – the power of manifestation

kundalini shakti – the power inherent in everything

mantra shakti – the power of sound

The Great Feminine Trinity

Hinduism’s great feminine trinity – Lakshmi, Durga, and Saraswati – represents the three primary modes in which spiritual power manifests. They are invoked and empowered by the mantras that follow.

Lakshmi: The Power of Abundance

In human history, “abundance” first meant enough food to eat. After that, it meant a good crop; until eventually, “abundance” became associated with enough crops left over to sell or trade. The idea of prosperity began to take shape.

As needs were satisfied, “wants” arose. The principle of prosperity grew into the concept of wealth, which began dividing simple societies into those with more and those with less. At the same time, “abundance” grew to embrace experiences like peace and harmony, and then such human values as family, friends, and health.

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There are specific mantras for all these things; but the underlying idea remains that of abundance. The following mantra invokes the original sense of providing all we need:

Om Shrim Maha Lakshmiyei Swaha

“Om and salutations to She who provides great abundance.”

If you are younger than twenty-eight, remember to replace Swaha with Namaha at the end of the mantra (see “Saturn,” page 25).

Durga: The Shakti of Protection

The immensely powerful Durga is the Mother as protector. Traditionally depicted as shining with spiritual energy and tender compassion, she seems at first the gentlest of feminine aspects. Then you notice that she is riding a tiger, and that in each of her many arms she carries a weapon.

This apparent contradiction is resolved in Durga’s dual role as protector of the spirit and destroyer of evil. Her weapons defend the pious against malicious intent or actions. Her smile reassures the innocent and good of her protection. To the arrogant, tyrannical, or demonic, on the other hand, she is a terrifying apparition. The weapons become active, and the tiger strains to pounce. Durga’s beatific smile fades as the power shines through her mask of beauty.

Durga is propitiated when devotion and caution go hand in hand. Her mantra is:

Om Dum Durgayei Namaha

“Om and salutations to She who protects the pious.”

This mantra always ends with *Namaha*, regardless of your age.

Saraswati: Secret Shakti of the Himalayas

Eastern philosophy commonly teaches that speech is an enabler of the mind. Mentally conceived desires only come to life in spoken, subtle, or magical speech. Mantra is magical speech, and Saraswati – as Vach, goddess of cosmic speech – is its ruler. She is the owner, mistress, and constructor of mantra. Saraswati is the power of Brahma, the creator; in other words, she is the Word. In traditional depictions, she is pictured sitting on a lotus holding a stringed instrument, book, mala, and hook. In some representations she also holds a spear and bell, symbolizing the power of ritual worship.

Saraswati also governs music and study. This simple, yet powerful, Saraswati mantra is used by those who follow the path of intellectual understanding and mental power.

Om Eim Saraswatyei Swaha

“Om and salutations to She who presides over the manifestations of divine speech.”

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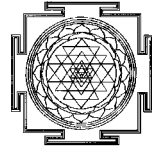
The classical *Mahavidya*, or Queen of Knowledge mantra, is somewhat longer:
Eim Hrim Srim Klim Sauh Klim Hrim Eim Blum Strim Nilatari Saraswati
Dram Drim Klim Blum Sah Eim Hrim Shrim Klim Sauh Sauh Hrim Swaha
(This mantra has no translation of even an approximate nature, since it is composed of seed sounds that invoke energy in certain specific ways.)

The Sri Chakra Mantra

Entire books have been written about the *Sri Chakra* (also called the *Sri Yantra*): a geometric design that represents the power of the universe itself. The mantra with which it is associated draws in the universe's primordial feminine force, according to one's ability to receive it.

Om Shrim Shriyei Swaha

"Om and salutations to the feminine force of the universe."



The Sri Chakra

SESSION EIGHT – THE MASCULINE PRINCIPLE IN MANTRA PRACTICE

In the Eastern masculine trinity, Brahma and Vishnu are represented at creation as having form. Shiva remains without form.

Shiva: The Consciousness of the Universe

Shiva is infinite consciousness – past, present, and future. He directs spiritual energy through the spine, connecting the kundalini to the top of the head and beyond.

Shiva is known as the Great Destroyer, but this description is flawed. It would be more accurate to call him the Great Spiritualizer, because it is Shiva who enables spiritual evolution by using the essence of our current level of understanding to move us to a higher plane. Followers of Shiva in northern India chant the following mantra to invoke this so-called "shakti of Shiva" – the feminine principle that powers his actions.

Hrim Shrim Klim Parameshwari Swaha

"Salutations to the supreme Feminine. May that abundant principle that hides the nature of ultimate reality be attracted to me."

Although Shiva is a masculine principle, his power – like all power – is Shakti, his feminine aspect.

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Shiva is not mentioned by name in the *Vedas*, although he is assumed to be inherent in the Vedic character Rudra (“he who dries up the sorrows”). Shiva himself appears in later scriptures, where it is written that he has five functions:

- creation
- maintenance
- destruction
- embodiment of consciousness
- emancipation or release

The Great Names of Shiva

Rudra: The Howler

Consciousness is not only venerated in “good” beings; it also exists in the lower spheres. Thieves, murderers, ghosts, and demons are capable of recognizing and honoring individual consciousness and its potentialities. Rudra dwells in mountains with his entourage of saints and goblins; thus, Shiva embraces all of consciousness, wherever it is found. Rudra is called “The Howler” because, having experienced both separation from and unity with the divine Source, he howls for union.

Om Rudraya Namaha

“Om and salutations to the Howler.”

This powerful invocation of unified consciousness is one of earliest recorded Shiva mantras.

Pashupati: Lord of the Animals

In ancient times, fierce animals threatened the Himalayan people. They appealed for protection to an aspect of total consciousness conceived as Pashupati (lord of animals). Later, this same idea came to include domesticated animals as well.

Mahadeva: The Great Lord

Over the centuries, Pashupati was transformed into Mahadeva (the Great God). It is he who is said to have brought the use of healing herbs into popular usage, and thus to have founded the science of natural remedies. The following mantra is useful for expanding one’s consciousness in this area – and also for opening the heart.

Om Maha Devaya Namaha

“Om and Salutations to Great God.”

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Lingaraja: The Androgyne

The *lingam* is not exclusively a phallic symbol, as is often thought. Rather, it symbolizes masculine and feminine conjoined, an inert representation of principle and an active representation of the manifest. This symbol inspires a state of consciousness free from prejudice in those who approach Shiva as an androgynous being.

Nataraja: The Cosmic Dancer

As Nataraja, the androgynous form of Lingaraja is seen dancing at the end of the world. This dance of Shiva is one of celebration in preparation for this next *mahakalpa* (great cycle), in which the energy of the universe will be transmuted to a higher spiritual level. The following mantra invokes Shiva the androgyne, as manifested in both Lingaraja and Nataraja.

Om Namah Shivaya

“May the elements of this creation abide in me in perfection.”

This mantra activates the elemental principles in our chakras, bringing them under our conscious control in the service of spiritual evolution.

Yogiraja: The Ascetic

As Yogiraja, Shiva is the naked, ascetic seeker after higher realities. He is often shown with eyes closed in meditation. The tiger skin upon which he sits symbolizes two things:

- the animal nature controlled to the point of annihilation
- the neutralizing of certain earth vibrations, allowing the kundalini to rise more easily up the spine (deer skin and sheep's wool accomplish the same effect)

Because – in keeping with the teachings of the Buddha avatar – he has rid himself completely of all desire, Yogiraja has become the peerless yogi who knows how to commune with the supreme Spirit. In the *Kurma Purana*, Shiva says of himself: “I am the liberator here of yogis from all worldly bondage. I am the cause as well as the effect of worldly existence, though I am bereft of all worldly ties. I alone am the annihilator, creator, and protector of the universe. *Shakti* is my potency.”

Shiva is also closely associated with the “third eye of consciousness.” Prompted by mental intention, this eye can reduce any object to ashes by a mere glance. Of course, the same glance can also heal – or stare into mystic realms where all knowledge resides.

Augadha: The Uncouth

Another name for Augadha is “The Uncouth.” In this aspect, Shiva enjoys consciousness-altering substances while continuing to maintain a separate existence. He drinks wine and smokes *ganja* (marijuana), and is often

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depicted as intoxicated (in this, Augadha approximates a combination of the Greek Diana and Roman Bacchus). Those who worship Shiva in this form are often said to have taken “the perverse path.” Yet even takers of ganja in northern India sometimes end up renouncing worldly pleasures to pursue higher states of consciousness. It is said that Shiva utterly seduces such people, for their own good.

Mahakala: The Lord of Time

As the ruler of time, Shiva is also master of destiny. His reputation as a destroyer arises from time’s apparent role as an agent of destruction. One sage wrote that Shiva was even able to alter the course of destiny. He is the only Hindu deity ever credited with this power.

Shiva as the Lord of Time has a counterpart in Tibetan Buddhism: the deity Kalachakra. Hence, Mahakala’s spiritual sound formula is the Kalachakra mantra discussed earlier (see page 11):

Om Ha Ksa Ma La Va Ra Yam Swaha

Again, these are seed sounds. The spirit of the mantra might be summed up as “Om and salutations to that which I am capable of becoming.” It is chanted by those who wish to master time.

Shambhu: Giver of Happiness

Sham means welfare or happiness, including health. *Kar* is the one who brings it. *Bhu* is the earth plane. One who can bring happiness even on the earthly plane is sometimes described as Shambhu (also called Ashutosh or Shankara): one who fulfills wishes instantly. This emanation of Shiva is the kindest and most generous: easily pleased by a little attention, and willing to bestow impossible boons. The principle he represents is that when our individual consciousness is united with the greater reality, we can cocreate and fulfill our desires instantly, through mere thought.

These mantras imbue one’s consciousness with compassion, reflecting the kind and nonjudgmental nature of Shiva:

Om Shankaraya Namaha

“Om and salutations to the giver of happiness.”

Om Shambhu Devaya Namaha

“Om and salutations to the angel who bestows happiness on this earth.”

Mahesh: Source of All Knowledge and Power.

In this aspect, Shiva once prodded Brahma to reveal the existence and meaning of the *Vedas*, thereby making them available to humanity. He is said to be the originator of all sound and music through his favorite syllable, “OM.”

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The name *Mahesh* means “best God” (reflecting the view of the sects that worship this aspect of consciousness). The Mahesh mantra is chanted by those who desire knowledge, wisdom, and power combined.

Om Maheshwaraya Namaha

“Om and salutations to He who is the source of all knowledge and power.”

Bhuteshwara: Lord of Baser Beings

Shiva exists in all things, animate and inanimate. Bhuteshwara exists to remind us that consciousness is everywhere – including beasts, rocks, and trees. Thus, all things are capable of spiritual growth.

A Shiva Mantra for Spiritual Growth

The following so-called *siddha* mantra is made up of the seed syllables that govern the elements associated with the chakras: earth, water, fire, air, and ether. This mantra is used to hasten the journey to spiritual maturity – the state of perfection enjoyed by the siddhas.

Om Nama Shivaya

“May the elements of this creation abide in me in perfection.”

The Sons of Shiva and Parvati

According to the *Puranas* and the *Mahabharata* (another spiritual classic of India), Brahma sent Parvati to Shiva specifically so that they would produce a son capable of killing a certain powerful demon. Although tradition depicts Parvati as a docile and subservient partner in the marriage (a model of how mortals should relate to the gods), she is also imbued with the power of the goddess Devi, who is said to be beyond the gods.

Skanda

Shiva and Parvati’s son Skanda (also called Subramanya and Kartikeya) rules the transformation of instinct into divine wisdom. He is typically depicted as young and strong, holding a spear that always hits its mark and returns to his hand. Skanda is associated with strength, optimism, and auspiciousness – hence, the following mantra is often chanted by those in pursuit of good luck.

Om Sharavana Bhavaya Namaha

“Salutations to the son of Shiva, who brings auspiciousness in every endeavor.”

Ganesha

The elephant-headed god, Ganesha, is Skanda’s brother. As the quintessential remover of both inner and outer obstacles, Ganesha represents the unitive principle in earthly affairs. His mantra specifically helps to harmonize humanity into a spiritual force that can better withstand everyday negative influences. Use it to remove any type of obstacle – inner or outer –

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that arises in your life.

Om Gum Ganapatayei Namaha

“Om and salutations to He who removes obstacles.”

SESSION NINE – MANTRAS AND HEALTH

The practice of mantra is not a remedy for all ills, nor can you necessarily expect the healing it brings to conform to your preconceptions. Do not use mantras to replace sensible medical care. In fact, your practice may even attract a cure in the form of a conventional treatment modality. Be ready to explore any route to recovery that may present itself. Mantras are not a substitute for other avenues, but rather a powerful complement to the various life-enhancing tools already available to you. Over time, you will find that they can significantly reinforce your overall health and well-being.

The following are the healing sound formulas you will hear on *Mantra: Sacred Words of Power*. Consult this list to find the category of mantra you need and the specific mantra that best suits your situation.

Mantras for General Conditions

Many of the world’s medical systems teach that disease results from energetic blockages in the body (or mind). I have found the following energy-releasing mantras to be powerfully effective in otherwise difficult cases.

For the spleen and skeletal system:

Om Sri Shanaishwaraya Swaha

“Om and salutations to the remover of obstacles for which Gum is the seed”

Systemic disorders such as chronic fatigue syndrome usually involve the spleen. As an added benefit, this mantra addresses issues of the skeletal system, which Saturn also rules.

As we have seen, Ganesha (or Ganapathi) is the supreme remover of obstacles. His mantra is therefore effective in removing those blockages that cause illness.

Om Gum Ganapatayei Namaha

“Om and salutations to the remover of obstacles for which Gum is the seed.”

The ancient Vedic records describe a healer called Dhanvantre, the “Celestial Physician.” His mantra is used to find a path to the appropriate healing method for any health problem:

Om Sri Dhanvantre Namaha

“Salutations to the being and power of the Celestial Physician.”

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In traditional households in southern India, women chant this mantra while preparing food, to infuse it with the powerful healing vibrations that ward off disease. Elsewhere, the mantra is chanted during food preparation for the sick or infirm. Chant it at least 12,500 times while concentrating on any condition that you would like remedied or healed. Remember to be open to whatever ways healing may manifest.

The Healing Power of the Sun

Mantras activate certain petals in the solar plexus chakra (the inner sun), producing powerful healing vibrations. The mantras may also be chanted at the sun itself, asking the "Great Sun Being" to send forth the *arkaya* energy (that which heals afflictions). When using these mantras, it is especially beneficial for the sick person to spend some time in the sun every day. This sun mantra retains the word *Namaha* at the end, regardless of your age.

Om Arkaya Namaha

"Om and salutations to the Shining One who removes afflictions."

The sun can also be invoked to heal problems of the eye. As with the previous mantra, try to get out in the sun daily while practicing it.

Om Grinihi Suryaya Adityom

"Om and salutations to the Shining One who heals the eyes."

Healing with Rama Mantras

Rama possessed the gift of being able to make something so by speaking it. Repeating certain Rama mantras carries similar energy. Their healing potencies are among the most powerful I have ever encountered. One way to enlist Rama's healing energies is with this simple but powerful mantra:

Om Ram Ramaya Namaha

"Om and salutations to the energy of Rama."

Rum (sometimes given as *Ram*) is the seed sound for the solar plexus chakra: the locus of tremendous, dormant healing energy. This mantra begins to awaken and activate the entire chakra.

Of all the mantras I have ever used for healing purposes, the following is one of the most powerful. I whimsically call it a "freight train" mantra because of its length; but those desperate for healing learn it easily, and many have experienced extraordinary results.

Om Apadamapa Hataram Dataram Sarva Sampadam

LoKa Bhi Ramam Sri Ramam Bhuyo Bhuyo Namam-yaham

"Om, O most compassionate Rama! Please send your healing energy right here to the earth, to the earth (twice for emphasis). Salutations." (This is a very rough translation.)

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I have seen this mantra cure one person completely from what was diagnosed as a schizophrenic break. It helped heal another sufferer from a physical condition involving nerves and sweat glands. Yet another person used this mantra effectively as a pain meditation.

The Markandeya Mantra

Of the three long mantras I call “freight-train mantras,” the Markandeya mantra is the other formula specifically used for healing (the third is the Gayatri mantra – see Session Twelve, page 30). It describes the remarkable reprieve from death of a boy named Markandeya, who was destined to die at the age of sixteen. Minutes before his sixteenth birthday, the pious Markandeya felt death approaching and called out to Shiva. Shiva stopped the aging process, eternally postponing the moment of his death. In India today, the legend persists of a sixteen-year-old sage who continues to live and practice deep in the Himalayas.

*Om Trayumbakam Yajamahe Sugandhim Pushti Vardanam
Urvarukamiva Bandhanan Mrityor Muksheeya Mamritat*

“Shelter me, O three-eyed Lord Shiva. Bless me with health and immortality and sever me from the clutches of death, even as a cucumber is cut from its creeper.”

The Markandeya mantra is also called the *Mahamrityunjaya* mantra – roughly translated, “great mantra of victory over death.” I worked with a young woman who used this mantra to recover from a near-fatal viral infection of her cartilage. When she gave it to a friend who was HIV-positive, his T-cell count improved.

Planetary Healing Mantras

Both Eastern and Western systems of astrology clearly link life conditions – including health issues – to the movement of the planets in relation to our natal astrology. The following mantras are based on the correspondences between planets or stars and the parts of our bodies. As such, they are useful in dealing with the conditions indicated.

The last mantra – to Saturn – is the only one of the planetary healing mantras to change its ending from *Namaha* to *Swaha* for those over twenty-eight years old. The others retain the ending *Namaha*.

Sun

Om Sri Suryaya Namaha

“Om and salutations to the presiding spirit of the sun.”

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Heart, spine, diaphragm, thymus gland, blood, and veins

The word Sri has been added to the sun mantra described earlier (page 23), to empower it with the feminine power of shakti.

Moon

Om Sri Chandraya Namaha

“Om and salutations to the presiding spirit of the moon.”

Stomach (including gastric processes), breasts, non-blood fluid systems (such as perspiration and saliva), and sympathetic nervous system

Mercury

Om Sri Budhaya Namaha

“Om and salutations to the presiding spirit of the planet Mercury.”

Hands, arms, lungs, and sensory organs; also partially effective for thyroid disorders

Venus

Om Sri Shukraya Namaha

“Om and salutations to the presiding spirit of the planet Venus.”

Throat, neck, kidneys; secondary connection with sex organs (especially in women) and feet; partially effective for thyroid disorders

Mars

Om Sri Angarakaya Namaha

“Om and salutations to the presiding spirit of the planet Mars.”

Sex organs (especially in men), adrenal glands, and red blood cells

Jupiter

Om Sri Gurave Namaha

“Om and salutations to the presiding spirit of the planet Jupiter.”

Liver, gall bladder, posterior lobe of the pituitary gland (related to growth), and thighs

Saturn

Om Sri Shanaish Waraya Swaha

“Om and salutations to the presiding spirit of the planet Saturn.”

Spleen, skeletal system (including cartilage), skin, lower leg from knee to ankle, and anterior lobe of the pituitary gland (related to body type). This is the same mantra discussed earlier (page 22).

SESSION TEN – MANTRA ATTUNEMENTS

In this session, you will have an opportunity to align your consciousness with three powerful mantras. Each of the mantras will be recited continuously for fifteen minutes. Chant along with the tape, or meditate while you allow the sacred sounds to penetrate your being.

Om Apadamapa Hataram Dataram Sarva Sampadam

Loḳa Bhi Ramam Sri Ramam Bhuyo Bhuyo Namam-yaham

“Om, O most compassionate Rama! Please send your healing energy right here to the earth, to the earth. Salutations.”

Om Trayumbakam Yajamahe Sughandhim Pushti Vardanam

Urvarukamiva Bandhanan Mrityor Muksheeya Mamritat

“Shelter me, O three-eyed Lord Shiva. Bless me with health and immortality and sever me from the clutches of death, even as a cucumber is cut from its creeper.”

Om Bhuh Om Bhuvaha Om Swaha

Om Maha Om Janaha Om Tapaha Om Satyam

Om Tat Savitur Varenyam

Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi

Dhiyo Yonaha Prachodayat

“O self-effulgent light that has given birth to all the *loḳas*, who is worthy of worship and appears through the orbit of the sun, illumine our intellect.”

(This is the great Gayatri mantra, which is discussed in detail in Session Twelve.)

SESSION ELEVEN – TIBETAN BUDDHIST MANTRAS

Buddhism first attained widespread acceptance in Tibet when the Indian tantric master Padmasambhava began defeating the established Bönpo priesthood through esoteric spiritual practice and ceremony, around 650 CE. An expert on the secrets of mantra and ritual, Padmasambhava provided a strong foundation for the Tibetan mantra tradition.

This branch of Buddhism, like its Hindu predecessors, uses anthropomorphized principles to embody certain attributes. Here are some of the many deities of Tibetan Buddhism and the mantras associated with them.

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Vajrapani: The Great Initiator

Vajrapani, “the indigo *bodhisattwa* (saint),” is one of Tibetan Buddhism’s most important protectors. It is he who initiates practitioners into the mysteries of Tibetan Buddhism. His mantra is:

Hung Vajra Peh

Hung: the Tibetan version of Hum; seed sound for the throat chakra

Vajra: instrument of power

Peh: weapon mantra

Chanting this mantra invokes a form of dynamic peace.

Vajrasattwa: The Great Purifier

This deity provides skillful means of purification; the powers of support for spiritual growth, vanquishing negative karma, and restraining evil behavior; and the antidote (to past karma). A traditional, one-hundred-syllabled Vajrasattwa mantra is used by *lamas* and advanced practitioners. The shorter, six-syllabled version is:

Om Vajra Sattwa Hung

This introductory mantra calls on Vajrapani to send a cleansing white beam into the top of one’s head, clearing out negative thoughts and mental habits.

Manjushri: The Gentle Holy One

Traditionally, Manjusri, the bodhisattva of learning and wisdom, holds the sword of discriminating awareness that cuts through ignorance.

Om Ah Ra Pat Sa Na Dhi Dhi Dhi

These seed sounds bring energy to the upper centers, beginning with the solar plexus or third chakra. In this way, the mantra invigorates our faculties of conscious awareness in the service of ultimate spiritual awakening.

The Kalachakra Mantra

The Kalachakra mantra discussed earlier (page 11) is another Tibetan Buddhist sound formula used to perfect the divine vehicle.

Om Ha Ksa Ma La Va Ra Yam Swaha

The Great Mani Mantra

This Tibetan Buddhist spiritual formula is the world’s most oft-repeated mantra. It is believed to be a vehicle for great personal transformation through Avalokiteshwara, the bodhisattwa of compassion. The essence of this mantra is that when mind and heart are united, anything is possible.

Om Mani Padme Hum

“The jewel of the mind has reached the heart’s lotus.”

MANTRA: SACRED WORDS OF POWER

Om: universality and unity

Mani: mind

Padme: unfolding of knowledge and power in the physical chakras; opening of the heart

Hum: integration between heart and mind

The Wesak Festival

The Wesak Festival occurs annually at the full moon when the sun is in Taurus (usually, but not always, in May). Traditional Buddhists celebrate the birth, death, and enlightenment of the Buddha on this day.

There is also an esoteric Wesak Festival that honors the work of spiritual teachers from all paths during the previous year. Its legend involves both the Buddha and the Christ. At the moment the full moon's light falls on a certain hidden valley in the Himalayas, it is said, the Buddha appears in a globe of brilliant white light. At the front of the valley is a flat rock bearing a crystal bowl filled with a spiritually charged liquid. The Christ, presiding over the ceremony, intones a mantra known only to him. The mantra floods all earthly realms with potent spiritual energy, which charges the teachers from all the world's religions that have gathered in the valley. It is also a signal for the Buddha to release a corresponding charge of spiritual light and energy to all the planet's inhabitants. This flood of energy is called the Great Outpouring.

In 1975, I attended a "Black Hat Ceremony," performed by His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa (spiritual head of the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism). The Great Mani mantra, *Om Mani Padme Hum*, is a cornerstone of that ceremony. Inspired by my experience, I decided to conduct a Wesak observance in honor of the Karmapa. I chanted mantras from five of the world's great religion for eleven hours, then lay down to rest. Immediately, I saw a shaft of brilliant, multicolored light enter me through my inner vision – my small share of the Great Outpouring. Since then, I have observed the Wesak every year by chanting the mantras below.

Jewish Mantra

Baruch Atoch Adonai Elohenu Mehloch Aholum

"Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe."

Christian Mantra

Oh Jesu Christaya Paramatmane Purusha Avataraya Namaha

The sense of this mantra is that Jesus is a true world teacher who carries the authority of the Divine.

Buddhist Mantra

Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Swaha

"Gone, gone, gone beyond, beyond beyond, awake, hail the goer."

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Tibetan Buddhist Mantra

Hung Vajra Peh

Seed syllables invoking Vajrapani, the great initiator and protector

Om Vajra Sattwa Hung

“Om to Vajrasattwa, who purifies and protects the sincere seeker.”

This purifying mantra is used to produce mental clarity.

Om Ha Ksa Ma La Va Ra Yam Swaha

Seed syllables invoking Kalachakra, spirit of the “wheel of time” (see page 11).

Chinese Buddhist Mantra

Namo Kwan Shi Yin Pu Sa

Kuan-yin is the Chinese feminine form of the buddha of compassion, Avalokiteshwara. The purpose of this mantra is to infuse consciousness with the compassion, without which knowledge and spiritual abilities are valueless.

Hindu Mantra

Om Namah Shivaya

“May the elements of this creation abide in me in perfection.”

Om Eim Saraswatyei Swaha

“Om and salutations to She (Saraswati) who presides over the manifestations of divine speech.”

After each of these mantras has been recited for one to four malas (rosaries), the Great Mani mantra (see Session Eleven, page 28) is chanted from one to ten hours.

Gurus and Teachers

The true guru is not a person but a principle. It resides in your own heart as part of your divine Self. The Sanskrit word for this principle is the *upaguru*, the teacher without form. It is the upaguru that leads us to the right teacher – and it is the upaguru, as part of our own divine Self, that all teachers serve.

Because truly advanced, authentic teachers are hard to find, we may sometimes find our inner voice telling us to move on, while the external teacher pressures us to stay. At that moment, the external teacher becomes a hindrance rather than a help.

Here is a mantra that powerfully activates the upaguru. It also helps develop divine discrimination, so that we know when it is time to go or time to stay with a given teacher in the body.

Om Gum Gurubhyo Namaha

“Om and salutations to the principle of the guru within.”

SESSION TWELVE – THE GAYATRI MANTRA

Among all the millions of sacred sound formulas archived in the Far East, the Gayatri mantra is universally considered the essence of all mantras, for all spiritual powers and potencies are contained within it. It is recognized throughout India and the Himalayas as supreme for achieving enlightenment. Indeed, amid the highly fractured and sect-ridden practices of both Hinduism and Buddhism, the Gayatri mantra is universally practiced.

The *Vedas* teach that the entire cosmos is made up of vibration. The sun, planets, ether, galaxies, atoms and molecules, and you and I are all composed of vibration. To achieve spiritual advancement is to refine our level of vibration. To seek enlightenment is to seek the universal source of vibration.

According to the Vedic cosmology, there are seven lokas, or luminous spheres of light. Each successive sphere is much more spiritually advanced and sublime than the previous one. The upper realms of light are the abodes of saints and sages, prophets and *rishis*, angels and archangels. It is said that each of the lokas can be summarized in a single vibration, which is, in turn, invoked by a syllable. To intone the syllable is to bring the vibration of that sphere into oneself. The Sanskrit words of the Gayatri mantra contain the essential vibrations of all seven lokas.

The Gayatri mantra appears in the *Rig Veda*, *Sama Veda*, and *Yejur Veda* (the earliest Hindu scriptures). Its origins are traced to a sage called Vishwamitra – a king who renounced his throne in order to seek spiritual awakening. Vishwamitra was the first to realize the essence of the luminous spheres of creation through the Gayatri mantra. Now, several thousand years later, his gift continues to free countless spiritual seekers.

There are two renditions of the Gayatri mantra. Here is the long form:

Om Bhuh Om Bhuvaha Om Swaha

Om Maha Om Janaha Om Tapaha Om Satyam

Om Tat Savitur Varenyam

Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi

Dhiyo Yonaha Prachodayat

“O self-effulgent light that has given birth to all the lokas, who is worthy of worship and appears through the orbit of the sun, illumine our intellect.”

This powerful mantra invokes the spiritual planes – and, where applicable, the associated physical chakras. The correspondences are as follows:

Om Bhuh – earth plane (first chakra)

Om Bhuvaha – atmospheric plane (second chakra)

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Om Swaha – solar region (third chakra)

Om Maha – first spiritual region beyond the sun; heart vibration (fourth chakra)

Om Janaha – second spiritual region beyond the sun; power of the divine spiritual Word (fifth chakra)

Om Tapaha – third spiritual region beyond the sun; sphere of the progenitors (sixth chakra) (This loka represents the highest realm of spiritual understanding one can attain while still identified with individual existence.)

Om Satyam – the abode of supreme Truth; absorption into the Supreme (seventh chakra)

Om Tat Savitur Varenyam – that realm of Truth that is beyond human comprehension

Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi

Dhiyo Yonaha Prachodayat

“In that place where all the celestials of all the spheres have received enlightenment, kindly enlighten our intellect.”

The short form of the Gayatri mantra is much more commonly practiced in the Far East:

Om Bhuh, Bhuvaha, Swaha

Om Tat Savitur Varenyam

Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi

Dhiyo Yonaha Prachodayat

Your Ongoing Mantra Practice

A higher or ideal state of being is the ultimate goal of all spiritual discipline, including the practice of Sanskrit mantra. The ideal state can be defined in a number of ways. You may decide you want to be a “good,” “spiritual,” or “righteous” person. You may wish to attain union with some great spiritual figure – to be one with the body of Christ, to be in union with Krishna forever, or to become an enlightened being like the Buddha. You might long to participate consciously in the ongoing work of the Cosmic Mind, Transcendental *Purusha*, or Great Oversoul (it goes by many names).

Those select few who follow through on such intentions will ultimately determine the fate of humanity. This is why I strongly urge you to look inside yourself and identify your own spiritual ideal. Dedicate all of your spiritual practices and disciplines toward the ultimate achievement of this objective.

This does not mean that you must forego intermediate goals such as wealth, a happy marriage, a good job, or good health. It merely means that you have framed an ultimate destination that is based in your own nature as a spiritual

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being. From there, you proceed with the understanding that the road and the destination are really one.

May your practice of Sanskrit mantra serve you well and exceed all your expectations in fulfillment of your material needs and spiritual objectives. May you become in actuality all that you are in potential. May the love that informs every cell in your body permeate every thought in your mind. May the joy of the universe flow through you every moment. And may the Supreme Principle compassionately empower your actions and fulfill your needs. Achieving this, you will know:

Tat Twam Asi

“You are that which you seek.”

The Energy of Love

If we are healed in all ways, we inevitably arrive at a state of love. I offer the following statements about love in the spirit of service, and in the belief that contemplating them can support your ongoing practice of mantra.

- Love is based upon unity. To love something is to be part of it in some way.
- Love involves understanding. In order to love, we inevitably know something about the beloved; and the beloved reveals its secrets to the lover.
- Love is an expression of selflessness. The ego with its desires and petty concerns is subordinated to something greater than itself.
- Love is transcendental. Because it is beyond human limits, love evokes miracles that respond to the call of love alone.
- In love, the means and the ends are one and the same. There is no way to achieve the condition or state of love other than by loving.
- God can grant us love as a gift.
- Love means service. Though we may run out of ways to express it, avenues of expression through service to others abound.
- The search for love is the end of all meaning. If we lust after power, yet have no love, our search will be dry and our attainments hollow.
- Love is our birthplace, our final refuge, and our reason for being. If we recognize that compassion and love are the ultimate destination of our search, the heart of the universe itself responds.

May you know within your own heart that you are an expression of divine love.

Aham Prema

“I am divine Love.”

GLOSSARY

agami karma: actions taken in one's present lifetime that will reap consequences in future incarnations

ajna: the brow center; abode of the sixth chakra

anahata: the heart center; abode of the fourth chakra

anthropomorphized principle: a spiritual principle embodied as a deity or other mythical personality

Aranyakas: "pertaining to the forest"; Hindu Vedic texts on the secret aspects of ritual and mantra (traditionally taught only to advanced students in the seclusion of the forest)

arkaya: the eleventh of the twelve names or powers of the sun

Avalokiteshwara: "the lord who looks in every direction"; a manifestation of the buddha of compassion

avatar: "descent"; a Hindu deity who assumes human embodiment in order to accomplish some divine purpose

Bhagavad Gita: "Song of the Lord"; a Sanskrit poem describing the path to unity with the divine through action, devotion, and knowledge; one of the most popular Indian scriptures

bhu: the earthly plane

bhuta: a ghost

bodhisattva: the final phase of personal liberation in order to work for the liberation of others

Brahma: the personification of all Creation; a member of the Hindu masculine trinity (see *Shiva* and *Vishnu*)

Brahmana: a portion of the Vedas devoted to commentary on mantras

brahmarishi: "a sage with the understanding of *Brahma*"; one of the highest states of spiritual development possible while still in an individual body

chakra: "wheel"; a subtle energy center located in the physical body

Dhanvantre: legendary healer known as the "*Celestial Physician*"

dharma: "truth" or "teachings"; specifically, the teachings of Hinduism or Buddhism

Durga: "the one who is difficult to approach"; the terrifying, protective aspect of feminine power; a member of the Hindu feminine trinity (see *Lakshmi* and *Saraswati*)

Ganapati: the great principle of inner unification; elephant-headed god of wisdom and good fortune; another name for *Ganesha*, son of *Shiva* and *Parvati*

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Ganesha: see Ganapathi

Gayatri mantra: a universal Hindu mantra on spiritual light

hare: “hail”; I salute

hrit padma: a subtle energy center located just below the heart (fourth) chakra

Indweller: the soul, especially in its relationship to the three qualities of existence: *sat* (truth or existence), *chit* (spiritual mind-stuff), and *ananda* (bliss); also called *Vasurveda*

Kalachakra: “wheel of time”; a teaching of the Buddha that embraces the environment (astrology, history, eschatology), the subtle body, and the purification of both

Kali: a fierce manifestation of the feminine divinity; the terrifying aspect of the divine creative principle; the destruction of negative ego

kalpa: a day and night in the life of *Brahma*; an immensely long period of time

kar: the bringer of happiness and well-being

karma: “action”; the cosmic law of cause and effect

Katha Upanishad: a Hindu scripture that specifically addresses the nature of life after death

Krishna: “dark”; one of the most popular Hindu deities; the Supreme Personage celebrated in the *Bhagavad Gita*

kriya: “action”; religious rites or ceremonies; the involuntary physical movements associated with the awakening of *kundalini*

kriyamana karma: “actions being made”; the immediate results of actions in one’s present lifetime

kundalini: a power cell located at the base of the spine, capable of releasing feminine energy in the service of spiritual awakening; in common parlance, synonymous with *shakti*

Lakshmi: “mark” or “sign” (often of prosperity); the principle of abundance; the Universal Mother; an aspect of the feminine trinity (see *Durga* and *Saraswati*)

lama: “higher one”; in Tibetan Buddhism, a spiritual teacher who has completed specific academic and meditation training

lingam: “symbol”; typically, of generative energy as embodied in the conjoined masculine and feminine sexual organs

loka: “world”; one of seven progressive spheres or planes of consciousness

maha: “great”

Mahadeva: “great Lord”; one of the names given to *Shiva* by *Brahma*

Mahamaya: “great illusion”; a goddess associated with *Durga*, whose power is to make the universe appear real or hide its true nature

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Mahavidya: “great knowledge”; each of ten Hindu goddesses through whom one can gain knowledge of the Absolute

mala: a rosary, typically comprising one 108 beads, used to count repetitions of mantras and other practices

manipura: a spot two finger-widths below the navel; abode of the third *chakra*

mantra: “mind device”; a spiritual sound formula used to invoke specific energies and principles

maya: “supernatural power”; the power of concealing Reality by misrepresenting it as the phenomenal world

mula: “root”; foundation

mukti: “liberation”

muladhara: base of the spine; abode of the first *chakra*

murti: “embodiment”; statue of a Hindu deity

Narasimha: a Hindu *avatar*, iconographically depicted in man/lion form and credited with the ability to destroy otherwise indestructible forces of evil

Narayana: the personification of creative energy, associated with the sun

Padmasambhava: “lotus-born”; the Indian tantric master credited with popularizing Buddhism in Tibet in the eighth century CE

prajnaparamita: “ultimate wisdom”; the last of Buddhism’s six *paramitas*, or perfections

pranayama: yogic breathing exercises, typically employed to awaken the *kundalini*

prarabdha karma: “action that has been unleashed or aroused”; that portion of our accumulated karma that has resulted in this lifetime

puja: “worship” or “adoration”; an exact spiritual science designed to establish contact with the inner worlds and invoke the presence of a specific god or one’s teacher

Puranas: a body of non-Vedic Hindu writings containing a blend of myth, history, and legend

purusha: “the spirit that dwells in the body/in the universe”; the soul or transcendent Self; sometimes used to refer to the Supreme Being

Purusha-suktum: a Vedic creation hymn to the transcendent Self

Rama: the seventh *avatar* of Vishnu

Ramayana: a Hindu spiritual tale that details the life and accomplishments of Rama

rishi: an Indian seer, sage, enlightened being

sahaja: “innate”; the natural state of enlightenment within the body

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sahasrara: the crown center; abode of the seventh *chakra*

samadhi: “union”; the absorption of consciousness in higher spiritual mind-states

sanchita karma: “accumulated action”; the sum of all our karma from previous lifetimes

Saraswati: “the flowing one”; goddess of the arts and learning; a member of the feminine trinity (see *Durga* and *Lakshmi*)

Satapatha Brahmana: a Vedic commentary on the sacred power of ritual

seed sound mantra: a powerful syllable, typically associated with an anthropomorphized principle and used as a building block for longer mantras

shakti: creative energy; a synonym (in common parlance) for the kundalini power cell at the base of the spine

sham: welfare or happiness (including health)

Shiva: “auspicious,” “gracious,” or “kindly one”; a member of the masculine trinity (see *Vishnu* and *Brahma*); primordial consciousness

Skanda: warrior son of Shiva and Parvati; brother of *Ganesha*

swadhisthana: the sexual center; abode of the second *chakra*

upaguru: the inner spiritual teacher

Upanishads: scriptural commentary on mantra and ritual; the final portion of the *Veda*

Vasudeva: “dwelling in all things”; see *Indweller*

Veda: “wisdom”; Hindu’s most authoritative scripture; the earth’s earliest recorded sacred text

Vishnu: “one taking different forms”; the embodiment, through human teachers, of goodness and mercy; with Shiva and Brahma, a member of the Hindu masculine trinity

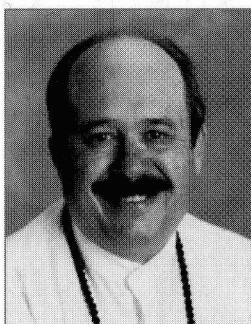
vishuddha: the throat center; abode of the *fifth chakra*

yajna: “worship” or “sacrifice”; ritual surrender through acts of inner and outer worship

yoni: “source”; the female origin of all appearance; the female sexual organ (typically symbolized by a triangle)

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